

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Downtown Elkin Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Market St., the Hugh Chatham Bridge, Standard St., & Front St. N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Elkin N/A ☐ vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Surry code 171 Zip code 28621

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crow SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/7/00
Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Downtown Elkin Historic District
Name of Property

Surry Co., NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☒ public-local
☒ public-State
☒ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
51	21	buildings
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
53	21	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single family
COMMERCE/professional
COMMERCE/specialty store
COMMERCE/department store
COMMERCE/warehouse
GOVERNMENT/city hall
GOVERNMENT/post office
EDUCATION/library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single family
COMMERCE/professional
COMMERCE/specialty store
COMMERCE/department store
COMMERCE/warehouse
COMMERCE/restaurant
COMMERCE/financial institution
GOVERNMENT/post office

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style
Modernistic
Bungalow/Craftsman
Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
WOOD
roof ASPHALT
other IRON
METAL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark 'x' in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

ca. 1855-1950

Significant Dates

ca. 1855

1889

1890

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Louis A. - architect

Rollins & Poindexter - builder

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Downtown Elkin Historic District
Name of Property

Surry Co., NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____ Approx. 25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	1	3	7	4	0	4	0	1	1	0	4	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2	1	7	5	1	3	8	0	0	4	0	1	0	4	4	0

3	1	7	5	1	2	8	4	0	4	0	1	0	8	8	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historian

organization N/A date December 3, 1999

street & number 637 N. Spring St. telephone 336/727-1968

City or town Winston-Salem state NC Zip code 27101

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple owners (more than 50)

street & number _____ telephone _____

City or town _____ state _____ Zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Downtown Elkin Historic District
Surry County, North Carolina

FUNCTION OR USE:

Historic Functions, cont'd.

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
HEALTH CARE/hospital
HEALTH CARE/medical business/office
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related
TRANSPORTATION/road-related

Current Functions, cont'd.

HEALTH CARE/medical business/office
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related
TRANSPORTATION/road-related
LANDSCAPE/parking lot
VACANT

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Downtown Elkin Historic District
Surry County, North Carolina

DESCRIPTION:

Materials, cont'd.

Other: CONCRETE
STONE

Narrative Description

Elkin is a small town of close to four thousand people located in the southwest corner of Surry County at the confluence of the Yadkin River and Elkin Creek. The Downtown Elkin Historic District constitutes the historic core of Elkin's commercial center. Situated roughly within Market Street, the Hugh G. Chatham Bridge, Standard Street, and Front Street, the district is made up of seventy-four resources, including seventy-two buildings and two structures. Eighty-nine percent of the resources are commercial in nature, while the remaining eleven percent are composed of five houses, the post office, the railroad tracks, and the Hugh G. Chatham Bridge. Of the seventy-four total resources in the district, sixty-four (eighty-seven percent) date from ca. 1890 to 1950. Only one, the ca. 1855 Gwyn-Foard House, was built prior to that time, while nine (twelve percent) were built after 1950. Seventy-two percent of the resources within the Downtown Elkin Historic District contribute to its historic character.

The layout of the Downtown Elkin Historic District follows a grid pattern centered on the intersection of Main and Bridge streets with Main Street, running east and west, serving as the primary artery. Paralleling Main Street are Market Street and municipal service alleys which split the blocks between Main and Market streets on the north and between Main Street and the railroad tracks on the south. Running perpendicular to Main Street and intersecting it, in addition to Bridge Street, are Court Street, Church Street, and Circle Court. The north-south oriented Hugh G. Chatham Bridge forms the eastern boundary of the district, continuing south across the Yadkin River to its end on the Yadkin County bank. Except for just over one block of S. Bridge Street, the district lies north of the railroad tracks.

The Downtown Elkin Historic District is a tightly-knit historic commercial area distinguished from its surroundings in several ways. Outside the boundaries of the district the character of the buildings changes in use and density. North of Market Street are parking lots, more recent twentieth-century buildings of various types and, going uphill away from the district, a combination of commercial buildings and early-twentieth-century residential stock. The Hugh G. Chatham Bridge (#1) anchors the east end of the district with a definite visual break; beyond the bridge, a mixed-use area extends to the

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Chatham Manufacturing Company. The area south of the district—south of the railroad tracks and moving toward the Yadkin River—is composed of vacant land and scattered post-1950 buildings, mostly small businesses such as a car wash, a laundry, and a produce store, but also including the large Smith-Phillips Lumber Company. West of the district are two parking areas on either side of W. Main Street followed by Front Street and Elkin Creek. Beyond Elkin Creek, the land use changes to residential, with a church and the W. Main Street-Surry Avenue neighborhood composed primarily of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century houses.

Most of the buildings in the district are of brick construction. However, two warehouses (#3 and #63) are corrugated or sheet metal over frame construction, and the former Elkin and Alleghany Railroad Office (#35) and the district's four dwellings (#36, #72, #73, and #74) are frame. The district is evenly divided between buildings that are one and two stories in height. The strongest concentration of two-story buildings is located on the south side of the 100 block of W. Main Street. Most of the others are found between Court and Church streets. Typical of downtown commercial centers, the majority of buildings are aligned with the sidewalk and are contiguous to other buildings. Those that are not include such buildings as the post office, the former Pure Oil station, the warehouse alongside the railroad, and the Circle Court houses. Green space in the district is confined to around the houses, the post office and two informal grass-planted areas located at the southwest corner of Market and Bridge streets and on the west side of S. Bridge Street between the service alley and the railroad tracks. Parking lots generally consist of small areas between buildings or lots behind buildings and are not particularly intrusive. One of the exceptions to this, however, is the lot located on the north side of the 100 block of W. Main Street, which leaves an unfortunate visual gap in the streetscape.

Good design and workmanship are generally present in the district's buildings, although knowledge of architects and builders is limited. Federal architect Louis A. Simon designed the post office (#29). Rollins and Poindexter were local brickmakers and builders credited with having built several of the early brick commercial buildings on Main Street. H. M. Burcham built the decorative pressed-metal-front Harris Building (#24) on W. Main Street. Local builder C. B. Franklin constructed the M. Q. Snow House (#36) at 226 W. Main Street and is believed to have built the bungalows at 114 and 118 Circle Court (#72 and #73).

The buildings in the Downtown Elkin Historic District represent several architectural styles popular primarily during the first half of the twentieth century. However, the oldest building in the district, the Gwyn-Foard House (#74), was erected prior to this period. Built ca. 1855, it is one of the finest Greek Revival dwellings in Surry County. It possesses many features characteristic of the style, but its most notable, and unusual, feature is its two-tier front porch. With lattice posts, sheaf-of-wheat designed balustrades, and curvilinear lattice friezes, it imitates the fancy ironwork sometimes found on porches of nineteenth-century urban houses.

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Most of the commercial buildings in the district fall into the category of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century standard commercial design. Since many of the first stories have been remodeled (to the standard commercial design of the third quarter of the twentieth century), the style is commonly exhibited at second-story level. Typical are round-arched windows—often with round-arched hood molds—or rows of rectangular windows, recessed panels created by raised brick pilasters and horizontal bands, and corbeled cornices from the simple to the richly detailed. Although most of the detailing is achieved through brick, several buildings utilize modest amounts of contrasting stone for decorative accents. Representative buildings are found throughout the district, but the best collection is found on the south side of the 100 block of W. Main Street. And while original first-story shop-front features have often been altered, some good examples survive, in whole or in part. Typical of these early features are recessed entrances—sometimes with ceramic tile flooring—luxor prism transoms, ironwork enframing pilasters, and pressed-metal first-story cornices. These can be seen at 105 W. Main St. (#16), 111 W. Main St. (#19), and 102 E. Main St. (#13). A few buildings, such as 125-127 W. Main St. (#25), retain decorative pressed-metal interior ceilings.

One of the most outstanding buildings in the district goes a step beyond the typical decorative features of standard commercial design. The facade of the Harris Building (#24) at 123 W. Main Street is covered almost entirely by decorative pressed-metal detailing. Featured here are classical engaged columns, a wide rusticated stone band, a triglyph-and-metope first-story frieze, dentil and modillion courses, and a cornice band of garlands, as well as other features. Ironwork and pressed-metal facades were once common in urban areas, but surviving examples are extremely rare in northwestern North Carolina.

Where one-story buildings were concerned, standard commercial design usually meant more simple buildings with one or more recessed panels in the upper facade. Occasionally, however, even one-story buildings exhibited round- or segmental-arched doors and windows with hood molds and decorative corbeled cornices. Examples of these types of one-story buildings can be seen on the south side of the 200 block of W. Main Street.

In the late 1930s and 1940s modernistic commercial design made several appearances in downtown Elkin. Two of these examples were originally theaters, and both emphasize a streamlined appearance and an emphasis on verticality. The Reeves Theater (#26) on W. Main Street achieves this primarily through the use of enameled metal panels, while the Neaves Building (#67) at 112 Church Street uses brickwork to obtain the same result. At the opposite end of the district, the one-story, red-brick commercial row (#10) at 112-120 E. Main Street uses narrow bands of contrasting white stone or concrete in a step design to create a modern sense of streamlined movement.

Across Circle Court from the Gwyn-Foard House stand two excellent examples of the Craftsman bungalow style. Both were built in 1923 and both were tied by ownership to the drugstore and Elkin's

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first hospital located a block away at a building (#41) erected about the same time at 128 W. Main Street. The Dr. W. D. Turner House (#72) is a one-and-a-half-story frame dwelling with a broad gable roof that encompasses a three-quarter-length front porch. Widely overhanging braced eaves are matched by those of a gabled wall dormer on the front of the house. The Dr. Hugh Parks House (#73) at 118 Circle Court is a one-story, dark-stained wood-shingle bungalow with a dramatically low-pitched, broad gable roof that, like the adjacent Turner House, extends in front to encompass an engaged porch.

In addition to the buildings that make up the Downtown Elkin Historic District, two structures are important resources. A stretch of the Yadkin Valley Railroad (#2) runs through the district south of Main Street. It is a physical reminder of the event—the arrival of the railroad in 1890—that was largely responsible for the growth of Elkin and which established the area in which the commercial center developed. The 1931 Hugh G. Chatham Bridge (#1) at the east end of the district provided reliable transportation across the Yadkin River that withstood the flood of 1940. Supported by concrete piers, the long bridge spanning the entire river bottom has arcaded concrete quardrails and two camelback metal trusses.

The appearance and development of the district during its period of significance (ca. 1890-1950) followed a logical progression, according to documentary information, period photographs, and Sanborn Insurance Maps. Although initially frame commercial buildings were lined up along Front Street paralleling Elkin Creek at the west end of the district, the arrival of the railroad in 1890 and the construction of the depot a good distance east of Elkin Creek changed the course of Elkin's commercial growth. Naturally, businesses soon began to move closer to the center of activity, and that center became the intersection of Main and Bridge streets.

Photographs from the mid-1890s show only two buildings—both two-story brick structures—located in Elkin's nascent downtown. These were on the south side of Main Street, on either side of Bridge Street, and not surprisingly, just uphill from the depot. In 1898 a large fire destroyed a number of frame commercial buildings that were located nearer the west end of the present district. Subsequent to that, brick construction became the rule. Photographs from ca. 1901, ca. 1905, 1908, and 1911 show that Main Street, particularly the south side, was rapidly filling up with brick buildings. By 1915, when the first Sanborn Map was made for Elkin, the south side of the 100 block of W. Main Street was a solid row of buildings, and the north side of the same block was nearly so. To the east of Bridge Street, growth was much slower. By 1925, the Sanborn Map reflects substantial growth on the north side of Main Street east of Bridge Street. By the 1942 Sanborn Map, the district had taken on the majority of its present appearance. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to date some of the Main Street buildings. Several fires destroyed some of the early buildings. Current photographs of Main Street, when compared with photographs from the 1890s and 1900s show differences in the appearance of some of the buildings. Either they were rebuilt or remodeled at some point, though certainly by the 1930s. Even

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though the dates of some of the buildings are uncertain, stylistically they are consistent with buildings erected during the 1890s and first quarter of the twentieth century.

Most of the buildings in the district are in good to excellent condition. Although several—all located on Bridge Street—have burned or otherwise been destroyed since the county-wide historical survey of 1982, and although many of the commercial buildings have remodeled first-story facades and a few have had their facades entirely covered with modern materials—both types of alterations consistent with downtown redevelopment of the 1960s—the district as a whole still conveys a strong sense of its appearance during its period of significance, ca. 1890-1950. As such, the district retains historic integrity in terms of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. For several years, Elkin's Main Street program has actively encouraged the preservation and revitalization of the historic downtown.

INVENTORY LIST:

The following inventory list provides basic information on all properties in the Downtown Elkin Historic District, including the property's name, location, date of construction, contributing or non-contributing status, and summary of its physical character and known history. Information is based primarily on both on-site inspection and on research with Sanborn Insurance Maps, *Elkin 1889-1989: A Centennial History*, old newspaper articles, *Simple Treasures: The Architectural Legacy of Surry County*, and oral interviews. Many building dates are given as a range between two dates, e.g. bet. 1915 and 1925. Using this example, that would mean that the building was not present on the 1915 Sanborn Map but was present on the 1925 map. Thus, it was built sometime between 1915 and 1925.

Entries are numbered (#1-74) to correspond with the numbered location of each property on the district sketch map. The inventory is organized geographically, starting with the Hugh G. Chatham Bridge, then moving west to the railroad and the warehouse on the railroad, then the south side of Main Street from east to west, then the north side of Main Street west to east, then the south side of Market Street from east to west, then Court Street, then the east side of S. Bridge Street, then the west side of S. Bridge Street from south to north, then the east side of N. Bridge Street, then the west side of N. Bridge Street from south to north, then the east side of Church Street, then the west side of Church Street from south to north, then the east side of Circle Court from the south to north, and then the west side of Circle Court.

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1. **HUGH G. CHATHAM BRIDGE**

NC 67 over Yadkin River

1931

Contributing structure

Spanning the Yadkin River between Elkin in Surry County and Jonesville in Yadkin County, this long metal-truss bridge was erected in 1931 as State Project No. 7960, built by the North Carolina State Highway Commission with federal aid. The bridge was named in honor of Hugh Gwyn Chatham, president of Chatham Manufacturing Company, who died in 1929. The bridge consists of concrete pier under-supports, a two-lane road flanked by arcaded concrete guardrails, and two camelback metal trusses. A sidewalk runs along the west side of the bridge. At each end of the bridge, the concrete guard rails become solid and curve outward, creating handsome entrances to the span. At the Elkin end of the bridge, two sets of concrete stairs lead from the bridge down to the north and south sides of E. Main Street. The bridge is the fourth in a series of bridges that crossed the Yadkin River between Elkin and Jonesville. The first was a covered toll bridge said to be the longest wooden suspension bridge in the world when it was erected in 1872. It was replaced by a steel bridge in 1913. The third bridge, also a steel bridge, was built in 1917 to replace the 1913 bridge which had washed away in the 1916 flood. The 1917 bridge was replaced by the fourth, present, bridge, which was unusual for its time because its high span crossed the entire river bottom, well above flood level. (Indeed, it survived the 1940 flood.) The Hugh G. Chatham Bridge has served for nearly seventy years.

2. **YADKIN VALLEY RAILROAD**

Railroad tracks bet. Hugh G. Chatham Bridge and just W of S. Bridge St.

1890

Contributing structure

On April 9, 1890, the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad reached Elkin on a new line running from Winston-Salem to North Wilkesboro. As in towns all over North Carolina, the arrival of the railroad was a pivotal event in the development of the town, bringing opportunities for increased trade and easier access to markets for both farm and manufactured products. With the railroad in place and five trains daily, growth in Elkin began in earnest. The 1891 frame depot stood until recent years on the east side of S. Bridge Street just north of the tracks. Although passenger service was discontinued in 1955, freight trains still service Elkin on the tracks now leased by the Yadkin Valley Railroad from Norfolk Southern.

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3. FERTILIZER WAREHOUSE

N side railroad tracks, behind 200 block E. Main St.
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

This is a surviving example of warehouses that once lined the railroad along the commercial and industrial sections of Elkin. It is a one-story frame structure sheathed with corrugated metal panels and covered with a broad gable roof. The 1942 Sanborn Insurance Map shows that the warehouse was originally connected to the freight depot by a platform.

4. (FORMER) LIBERTY TOBACCO WAREHOUSE

222 E. Main Street
Between 1915 and 1925 (probably ca. 1920)
Contributing building

This expansive building was in use by 1925 as the Liberty Tobacco Warehouse, one of two tobacco warehouses (with McNeer's) located on the south side of E. Main Street at the time. It was operated by B. L. Jeffords. By 1942 the building was being used for cotton and wool storage with horse stalls in the basement. Today it is the Cash & Carry warehouse. The mammoth, one-story brick building features a seven-bay facade defined by brick pilasters and a corbeled cornice, while the broad gable roof has stepped-parapet ends. With the Hugh G. Chatham Bridge, the warehouse forms a solid anchor to the east end of the historic district.

VACANT LOT

Between 222 and 214 E. Main Street is a narrow, concrete-paved vacant lot where a two-story store once stood.

5. THE TRIBUNE BUILDING

214 E. Main Street
ca. 1950
Non-contributing building

During its first few decades, this brick building housed a series of stores. Although the sides of the building are probably much like they were originally, the facade has been re-designed with

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brick veneer, a slightly arched cornice, arched windows, and a metal canopy over the central entrance. Prior to occupying this building, the *Elkin Tribune* was located for years at 113 W. Market Street.

PARKING LOT

Between 214 and 206 E. Main Street is an unpaved vacant lot below street grade that is used for parking.

6. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

206 E. Main Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

This simple one-story brick store was built during the second quarter of the twentieth century and is distinguished by the Flemish-bond patterned brickwork of the facade. Plate glass shop windows flank the central entrance.

7. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

204 E. Main Street
Between 1915 and 1925
Contributing building

A 1945 photograph shows that at that time this building was part of the F. A. Brendle & Son business. Listed on the 1925 Sanborn Map as a store, the little building is typical of many small commercial structures erected during the first half of the twentieth century. It is a one-story brick building with a central entrance, plate-glass shop windows, and a plain brick upper facade with a simple corbeled cornice. The rear has common-bond brickwork, and the windows and double-leaf loading door have segmental-arched lintels.

8. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

200 E. Main Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

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This one-story brick commercial building features a slightly recessed entrance, plate-glass shop windows, and a plain upper facade of narrow brick veneer. The building is shown in a 1945 photograph as part of the F. A. Brendle & Son store. Brendle started his business after the 1919 fire of the adjacent McNeer Tobacco Warehouse. By 1986 Brendle's had grown to a chain of thirty-five stores.

9. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

122 E. Main Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

The 1942 Sanborn Insurance Map indicates that at that time, this building was used as an office. Now used as a specialty shop, it is a simple one-story brick building decorated only by a slightly recessed panel across the upper facade (where the sign is now located). The lower portion of the facade consists of a recessed plate-glass entrance and plate-glass shop windows. Above and below the windows are bands of asbestos shingles.

10. COMMERCIAL ROW

112-120 E. Main Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

Probably built in the mid-1930s, this row of one-story brick stores adds a modernistic sensibility to E. Main Street. Numbers 116, 118, and 120 are all the same width, while 112 is twice as wide as any of the others. The four are united by their design, consisting of red brick facades with narrow bands of contrasting white stone in a modern "step" design. Lower facades have plate-glass doors and windows. The row stands on what was the site of one of Elkin's largest tobacco warehouses. McNeer's Warehouse was built in 1914, and though it suffered several fires, it functioned until the early 1930s. In 1932 Elkin's first community fair was held at McNeer's Warehouse. In 1961, Western Auto occupied 120 E. Main and boasted that they had been there for twenty-five years (since 1936). Similarly, Ed Snyder's Store occupied 116 E. Main Street in 1961 and claimed to have served Elkin since 1940. From at least 1945 to 1961, 112 E. Main was Rose's 5- and 10-cent store.

11. (FORMER) J. C. PENNEY BUILDING

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108 E. Main Street
Between 1925-1942 (probably ca. 1928)
Non-contributing building

When J. C. Penney closed its store at this location in 1985, it claimed to have been doing business for fifty-seven years, since 1928. In the Golden Anniversary issue of *Elkin Tribune* (1961), the store announced that it had recently been remodeled with a new front and shop windows, new fixtures and lighting. Despite the one-story brick building's modern metal facade, the interior retains its decorative pressed metal ceiling, four sets of skylights, and rear mezzanine.

12. **COMMERCIAL BUILDING**

106 E. Main St.
Early twentieth century (by 1915)
Contributing building

This two-story brick commercial building appears on the first Sanborn Insurance Map to cover Elkin, in 1915. Although the first story of the facade has been completely remodeled with vinyl siding, a new door, and small windows, the second story detailing reveals its age. Its round-arched window openings with slightly projecting hood molds and its cornice with sawtooth and corbeled bands resembles many of the buildings in the 100 block of W. Main. Inside, the decorative pressed metal ceiling and cornice of the first floor survive. Originally this was a general store with an insurance office and a Masonic Hall on the second floor. Since 1951 it has been a pool hall.

VACANT LOT (see # 13)

13. **(FORMER) HOLCOMB BROTHERS WHOLESALE GROCERY**

102 E. Main Street
1895-1896
Contributing building

Although documentary photographs suggest that this two-story brick building was remodeled in the early twentieth century, it was constructed, beginning in 1895, for Andrews, King, & Company and finished the following year under the ownership of King & Greenwood. Prominent local brickmakers and builders Rollins and Poindexter are credited with its construction. From

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1908 to the 1930s the building was the Holcomb Brothers Wholesale Grocery. With the Atkinson Company (formerly Click and Company) across Bridge Street, it operated the Alleghany Produce Company which served six surrounding counties. Later the building was used by Casstevens Hardware, and now it is a restaurant. The building is characterized by its recessed corner entrance, wrap-around prism glass transom, round-arched windows, quoined pilasters defining the bays of the second story, and multi-layered dentiled and corbeled cornice. The current occupant utilizes the vacant lot between 102 and 106 E. Main (where another two-story brick building stood until recent years) as an outdoor dining area with a wood deck floor.

PARKING LOT

Behind 102-122 E. Main Street, a public paved parking lot fills the space where Elkin's 1891 depot stood until recent years.

GREEN SPACE

Behind the buildings on the south side of the 100 block of W. Main Street is a planted green space. Sanborn Maps show that in earlier years frame warehouses were located in this area.

14. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

101 W. Main Street

Ca. 1896; early twentieth century; mid-twentieth century

Non-contributing building

The date of this two-story brick building is not certain. Old photographs show that one of the earliest brick commercial buildings in Elkin—the Click & Company Store—had been built at this site ca. 1896, but a late 1930s photograph shows that the facade, at least, had been greatly altered by that time. The current exterior appearance of the building appears to date from the 1960s. Sanborn Maps show that in 1915 the building was used as a dry goods and clothing store. Subsequent maps list the building only as "store," and show that between 1925 and 1942 a one-story addition was built to the rear of the building. For some years now, the building has been used by Spainhour's, a clothing store.

15. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

103 W. Main Street

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Early twentieth century; mid-twentieth century
Non-contributing building

The 1915 Sanborn Map shows that by that time a two-story brick building had been built on this site. It was used as a millinery, with a bottling works in the basement. Local tradition claims that around 1930 Elkin's first airplane—a one-passenger Heath-Parasol—was under construction in the building. Photographs from the late 1930s show that at that time the building was McDaniel's store and the Western Union office. These photographs also reveal that the building was slightly lower in height than were 101 and 105 W. Main. Today the building is several feet taller than those on either side, and the facade has a modern sheathing that was probably added in the 1960s.

16. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

105 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

Old photographs suggest that this building may have been built as early as 1905 but certainly by the late 1930s, when it was a hardware store. Apparently this was its use for years, since the 1915 Sanborn Map indicates that the building was a hardware store then. From 1925 to 1942 it was shown on the Sanborn Maps as a store with paints and oils stored in the basement, suggesting that it was still a hardware store. It is a handsome two-story brick building whose first story—with its bordering classical cast-iron pilasters, deeply recessed entrance, double-leaf doors, and luxor-prism transom—is more intact than most on the street. The second story is divided by plain pilasters into three bays, each with a round-arched window with stone keystone. The upper level of the second story has three slightly recessed panels, each with a diamond-shaped stone at its center.

17. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

107 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

Allowing for alterations typical of the mid-twentieth century, the buildings at 107, 109, 111, and 113 W. Main are so similar that they may have been built as one structure or at least at the same

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time. Although the first-story shop front of this building has been remodeled, the second story remains intact. Its simple design includes three bays divided by plain pilasters and a paneled, corbeled cornice. Though the window sash have been replaced, the flat-arched brick lintels survive. In 1915 the building was used as a dry goods and clothing store. Later Sanborn Maps are less specific, labeling the building as simply a store.

18. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

109 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

Like most other commercial buildings on Main Street, the first-story shop front of 109 W. Main Street has been remodeled. However, the second story appears to be largely intact with the three bays defined by plain pilasters and three recessed windows (enclosed with louvered-blind-like panels) with flat-arched brick lintels. The cornice is plain. From at least 1915 to 1942 the building was used as a drug store.

19. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

111 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

Tile flooring leads to the deeply recessed main entrance and side stair entrance of this two-story brick building. Unlike the mid-twentieth-century glass and aluminum doors found on many of the buildings on Main Street, the entrance of this building is a single-leaf, glass and wood door surrounded by sidelights and transom. Like its immediate neighbors, the second story of 111 W. Main has three recessed windows which maintain the visual rhythm of the row despite the fact that the windows themselves are mid-twentieth-century replacements and the brickwork has been stuccoed. The 1915 Sanborn Map shows that at that time, the building was a clothing store, which is its current use.

20. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

113 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

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While 109 and 111 W. Main Street have plain upper facades and cornices, 113 W. Main is identical to 107 W. Main in having a recessed panel stretching across the upper facade and a simple corbeled cornice. Like the other three buildings in the row (107-113), this two-story brick building has three recessed second-story windows. The window openings themselves, like those on 109 W. Main, have been enclosed with louvered blind-like panels. The first story has a deeply recessed double-leaf entrance. In 1915, this was a 5-and-10-cent store.

21. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

115 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Non-contributing building

Although the body of this two-story commercial building was torn down in 1997 after the roof collapsed, the handsome rusticated cut-granite facade remains largely intact, awaiting restoration. Although the first story has been boarded up for safety, the view from the burned-out rear shows that it retains its double-leaf main entrance, narrow double-leaf side stair entrance, and luxor-prism transom. The second story features a band of four rectangular windows and a slightly recessed panel in the upper facade pierced by an ironwork grill vent above each window. The building was used as a furniture store in 1915, according to the Sanborn Map of that year. Old photographs suggest that the building may have acquired its granite facade between 1920 and 1935.

22. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

117 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

As with 115 W. Main, old photographs suggest that this two-story brick building may have acquired its present facade between 1920 and 1935. Although the first story exhibits a typical mid-twentieth-century glass-and-aluminum remodeling, the handsome second story with its deep red brickwork and contrasting granite trim remains intact. It is three bays wide with two-over-two sash round-arched windows recessed within round-arched surrounds. The windows boast granite keystones and sills. Above the windows, the cornice consists of a granite string course, three recessed panels, and a granite coping. From at least 1915 to 1925 the building was the location of a movie theater. Subsequent to that, it has housed various stores.

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23. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

119-121 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

The second story of this handsome two-story brick commercial building survives intact except for the topmost layer of the cornice which has been covered with metal. The building has seven bays defined by round-arched sash windows with round-arched brick hood molds. The bays are visually reinforced by the cornice with its deep V-patterned corbeling. Although the first-story shop fronts have been altered, the decorative metal first-story cornice features remain intact. The building appears to have been erected during the early years of the twentieth century. It is shown in a 1920s photograph of Main Street, and the 1915 Sanborn Map indicates that at that time it was used for the packing and shipping of canned goods, while a temporary school room was located on the second floor.

24. HARRIS BUILDING

123 W. Main Street
1902
Contributing building

The Harris Building is one of the oldest and one of the most architecturally interesting buildings in downtown Elkin. Although the first story has been remodeled, the second story remains intact except for the removal of the topmost center cornice panel and cornice finials (shown in a 1920s photograph). The building is the only one in Elkin that retains nearly a full facade of pressed metal decoration, including classical engaged columns, a wide rusticated "stone" band above the windows, a triglyph-and-metope first-story frieze, dentil and modillion courses, a cornice band of garlands, and other classical motifs. According to family tradition, the building was erected by H. M. Burcham for E. E. Harris. Originally used as a hardware store, the building later housed a cafe, a clothing store, a notions store, and a drug store, as well as other businesses.

25. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

125-127 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

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This fine, two-story brick building has seven round-arched two-over-two sash windows with round-arched brick hood molds on the second story and a decorative corbeled cornice. The first story has two shop fronts separated by a central round-arched door leading to the second floor. The first story retains its pressed-metal cornice. Number 127 also retains its luxor-prism transom (seen from the inside) and, on the interior, its decorative pressed-metal ceiling and cornice. The building was probably built during the earliest years of the twentieth century; in 1915 it housed a grocery and a general store.

26. **REEVES THEATER**
129 W. main Street
1941
Contributing building

Dr. W. B. Reeves built this seven-hundred-seat theater in 1941 for \$100,000. In 1937 Reeves had built the three-hundred-seat Elk Theater before he realized Elkin could support a larger theater. In the 1940s he also ran the town's two other theaters, the State and the Lyric. Reeves sold this theater in 1973, at which time the balcony was enclosed to create a second theater. The first story has been altered; originally it had two stores flanking the central foyer. Above the first story, the facade retains its vertical modernistic styling composed of enameled metal panels and casement windows.

27. **(FORMER) MUTUAL FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN BUILDING**
201 W. Main Street
1979
Non-contributing building

From at least 1915, several one and two-story commercial buildings occupied this site. In 1979 Mutual Federal Savings and Loan built this one-story modern building with an aggregate-pebble and glass paneled facade. The building may have incorporated parts of one or more of the older buildings on the site. The building's upper half overhangs the sidewalk.

28. **FRAZIER BUILDING**
207-209 W. Main Street
Late 1920s
Contributing building

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When Dr. Clyde E. Nicks, Elkin's first licensed veterinarian, purchased this building in 1936, it was referred to in a newspaper article as the "Frazier building." A 1936 photograph shows that at that time the building had a recessed primary entrance with shop windows and a paneled wood dado. A separate entrance led to the second floor, which Nicks converted into two apartments, one of which his family occupied. The Nicks family moved in 1946, when Dr. Nicks built a new office/home. The two-story brick building has a three-bay second story with round-arched windows and a decorative brick cornice; the first story has been remodeled since 1946.

29. UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

213 W. Main Street

1937

Contributing building

The post office was built with federal funds as part of the post-Depression recovery. Begun in 1937, it was occupied on April 7, 1938. Federal architect Louis A. Simon and engineer Neal A. Melick supervised construction. The exterior of the building is of modernized Colonial Revival design with decorative red brickwork and contrasting limestone trim. The building has fifteen-over-fifteen sash windows, a handsome classical entrance with eagle pediment, and a flat roof. The interior features an enclosed vestibule and a lobby with a tile floor and wainscot. Although many post offices of the period have government-funded lobby murals depicting scenes from local history, Elkin's lobby boasts a low-relief sculptural panel of a herd of elk (a mistaken reference to the origin of the town's name) by New York artist Anita Weschler. The free-standing post office is bordered on the east by a paved parking area and on the west by a paved driveway.

30. DR. E. G. CLICK'S OFFICE

219 W. Main Street

Ca. 1930

Contributing building

In 1936 this little building was located on the site of the post office. In preparation for the construction of the post office, it was moved just west to its present location. Initially and for some years it was the dental office of Dr. E. G. Click, who lived in the ca.1855 Gwyn-Foard House across the street (#75). The one-story brick building features simple Colonial Revival styling with patterned brickwork, a Colonial Revival entrance, nine-over-one sash windows with paneled wood shutters, a wood cornice above the entrance and windows, and a parapet above

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that.

31. LAWRENCE DRY CLEANERS

221-223 W. Main Street
Ca. 1920
Contributing building

This one-story brick building is characterized by two shop fronts with recessed entrances, double-leaf doors, glass transoms, and patterned brickwork giving the impression of upper-facade rectangular panels. Although the west half of the building may have been built as an electrical repair shop prior to the east half, by 1936 the building was functioning as Lawrence Dry Cleaners. In a 1961 newspaper advertisement, the business, opened in 1920, boasted being the oldest dry cleaners in town.

32. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

225 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

Sanborn Maps suggest that this small one-story brick building may have been built by 1915, when a building at this location was labeled as a restaurant. Subsequent Sanborn Maps list it as a store. It features a three-bay facade with a central entrance, flanking windows—all with segmental-arched heads and hood molds—an upper facade recessed brick panel, and a decorative brick corbeled cornice.

33. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

227 W. Main Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

This diminutive one-story brick building consists of a two-bay facade with a glass-and-wood-paneled entrance immediately west of a large shop window. Across the upper facade is a recessed brick panel with a simple corbeled cornice. The building has housed a variety of retail uses and is currently a florist shop.

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34. INSURANCE SERVICE CENTER

227-A W. Main Street

1978

Non-contributing building

This one-story brick commercial building with Colonial Revival entrance and wood-shingled pent roof was built in 1978 for the Insurance Service Center, its current occupant.

35. (FORMER) ELKIN & ALLEGHANY RAILROAD OFFICE

229 W. Main Street

Ca. 1870; ca. 1920

Contributing building

This small frame building was built ca. 1870 on the east bank of Elk Creek (where the present public library stands) as the office of the Elkin Manufacturing Company. After the 1916 flood, the building was moved to its present location and became the office of the Elkin and Alleghany Railroad, which operated from 1911 to 1931. The rail line was intended to connect the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad at Elkin with the Norfolk and Western Railroad at Jefferson, thereby gaining access to northwestern North Carolina's timber and western Virginia's coal. However, tracks were laid only to Doughton. In 1937 the Elkin Woman's Club, assisted by the WPA, established Elkin's first public library; it occupied this building from 1938 to 1942. Other uses of the building have included Elkin's first telephone office, the office for the Ipock Coal Yard which stood southwest of the building, the headquarters of Elkin's Red Cross during World War II, and the North Carolina License Plate Agency. Although the building has lost its late-nineteenth-century sawnwork detailing and has been sheathed with vinyl siding, it retains its three-gable roof and its symmetrical facade with two entrances and central windows.

36. M. Q. SNOW HOUSE

226 W. Main Street

1920-1921

Contributing building

Martin Quilla Snow operated a clothing store (no longer standing) in the 100 block of W. Main Street (N side) and served on the Surry County Commission for around thirty years. He purchased this house, constructed by prominent local builder C. B. Franklin, prior to its

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completion so that he could direct the finishing details. Though its address is on W. Main Street, the Snow House is part of the Circle Court development of the early 1920s. It is a two-story, brick, Colonial Revival house with a wrap-around classical porch, bracketed eaves, and a central entrance with sidelights, a fanlight transom, and a bracketed hood. The house has been owned and occupied by the same family since its construction.

- 37. FOX BUILDING**
222 W. Main Street
1946-1947
Non-contributing building

This one-story brick building was built for Dr. M. O. Fox by J. W. Shepherd Construction Company. From 1947 until his death in 1963, Dr. Fox used the building as his dental office. Subsequent to that, the building has been used for various offices, including its present use as the office of oral surgeon Dr. James M. Walter, Jr. In 1996 the building was completely remodeled and expanded from 900 to 1200 square feet.

- 38. COMMERCIAL BUILDING**
218-220 W. Main Street
Second half twentieth century
Non-contributing building

Built after mid-century, this one-story, concrete-block building has a brick veneer facade, front bay windows, and a wood-shingled, flared pent eave across the front.

PARKING LOT

Between 218-220 and 210-212 W. Main Street is a paved parking lot.

- 39. COMMERCIAL BUILDING**
210-212 W. Main Street
Late 1930s; ca. 1990
Non-contributing building

Originally, William Marion Allen, a prominent local attorney, occupied this building as his office.

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Now consisting of two offices, it is a one-story brick structure with replacement front doors and windows. Built with a flat roof typical of commercial buildings of the period, it was remodeled ca. 1990 with a broad, front-facing gable roof.

PARKING LOT

Between 210-212 W. Main Street and the northwest corner of W. Main and Church streets is a paved parking lot.

40. **(FORMER) MAIN STREET PURE OIL SERVICE STATION**

NW corner W. Main and Church Streets

1930s

Contributing building

After the second Elk Inn burned in the early 1930s, the Pure Oil Company built a service station on the site. Pure's stations were designed to look like small English country cottages intended to impart a comfortable, residential look to attract customers. Although the one-story brick structure no longer retains its front canopy and west side service bays, its ultra-steep gable roof and gable-end chimney still clearly identify its original use. The building is being adaptively re-used as a drive-thru branch bank for BB & T.

41. **(FORMER) ELKIN HOSPITAL/TURNER DRUG STORE**

128 W. Main Street

1924

Contributing building

The well-preserved design of this two-story brick building features a recessed main entrance with another entrance at the east end of the facade leading to the second floor, a luxor-prism transom, and on the second story, one-over-one sash windows with granite sills separated by plain pilasters on both the facade and west elevation, and a paneled cornice. The first-floor interior boasts a tile floor and Art Deco-style soda fountain and rear booths. The first floor of the building was used originally as the Turner Drug Store, while on the second floor Drs. H. Clay Salmons and Robert R. Garvey established Elkin's first hospital. It boasted a lab, an operating room, a sterilizing room, two offices, a waiting room, a dining room, a kitchen, and patients' rooms. During the hospital's first year, there were 350 admissions, clearly demonstrating the need for such a facility

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in Elkin and leading to the building of the Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital in 1931. After the new hospital opened, the second floor of this building was used for medical and dental offices. The first floor remained a drug store.

42. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

126 W. Main Street
Between 1915 and 1925
Contributing building

This one-story brick commercial building is typical of many built from the 1910s through the 1930s in towns across North Carolina. It has a deeply recessed front entrance, a recessed panel across the upper facade, and a simple corbeled cornice. A flat metal canopy shelters the sidewalk in front of the building.

43. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

124 W. Main Street
Between 1915 and 1925
Non-contributing building

This one-story brick commercial building originally was similar in design to the adjacent building at 126 W. Main Street with its recessed panel across the upper facade and simple corbeled cornice. Although the building retains some of its original design features, the stone veneer added to the facade in the 1980s or 1990s changed its visual character.

44. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

118-122 W. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

In 1915 this two-story brick building was being used as a bank in the west half and as a drug store in the east half. Subsequent to that, the building has had a variety of occupants. Although the first story of the facade has been remodeled, the second story and rear of the building remain largely intact. The second story of the facade features a band of seven segmental-arched windows with keystone brick lintels. The windows are separated by vertical recessed panels. Above the windows are horizontal recessed bands and a decorative corbeled cornice. The rear of the

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building retains a row of eight segmental-arched windows on the second story and central rear entrances (to each half of the building) flanked by segmental-arched windows on the first story.

PARKING LOT

Between 120-122 and 102 W. Main Street is a paved parking lot that replaced several commercial buildings after 1982.

45. FIRST UNION BANK

102 W. Main Street

1984-1985

Non-Contributing building

This modern, two-story brick bank with drive-thru teller stations on the west side was built as the Northwestern Bank in 1984-1985, but soon thereafter it became First Union Bank. The town clock was installed atop a tall pier at the corner of the building. Originally, Elkin's first bank, the Elkin National Bank, was built at this location after being established in 1901. It was a three-story building whose facade boasted round-arched windows with hood molds, a paneled cornice, and a recessed corner entrance sheltered by an open, round-arched entry area supported by a corner classical column. A two-story commercial section extended beyond the west side of the bank and was unified with it by round-arched windows on the second story. In 1937 the building was renovated and was occupied by the Bank of Elkin. At that time the third story was removed and the bank was joined with the adjacent two-story commercial building. The second-story round-arched windows were retained, though the hood molds were removed. The recessed corner entrance with support column was kept, and round-arched windows were installed across the entire first story of the facade. The building maintained this appearance until the construction of the new building in the mid-1980s.

46. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

101 E. Main Street

Between 1936 and 1942

Non-contributing building

McNeer Hardware Company was located here for at least twenty years prior to being destroyed by fire on December 24, 1935. Subsequent to that but prior to 1942, the present one-and-a-half-

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story brick building was erected on the site. The simple structure with plain facade and horizontal multi-paned windows on the west side elevation was remodeled in the late twentieth century. Now its appearance is dominated by its wrap-around wood-shingled pent eaves across the first-story shop fronts and over the west-side rear entrance and its "half-timbered" design between the two front entrances.

47. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

105 E. Main Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

Sanborn Maps suggest that this building may have been erected by 1915, when it was the location of the *Elkin Tribune*. However, it appears to have been remodeled or built anew around 1936 after the adjacent fire at McNeer's Hardware in late 1935 threatened to engulf the entire block. Although the shop front of the two-story brick building was remodeled later in the century, the rest of the building appears intact. The second story of the facade features multi-pane casement windows, recessed panels, and a metalwork modillioned cornice with plain parapet. The rear of the building has metal-frame windows and a door at each level. On the interior, the first floor retains its decorative pressed-metal ceiling and cornice.

PARKING LOT

Between 105 and 111 E. Main Street is a paved parking lot that replaced the two-story Lyric Theater after 1942.

48. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

111 E. Main Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Non-contributing building

This two-story brick building probably was built or enlarged after the 1935 McNeer's Hardware fire. Although the facade retains a deeply recessed central entrance and a side entrance to the second story, it has otherwise been completely changed with remodeled shop windows, a flat metal canopy over the sidewalk, and a metal-sheathed second story.

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49. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

113-115-117 E. Main Street
Between 1915 and 1925
Non-contributing building

This one-story brick building encompasses three separate stores. The east elevation and rear appear intact, but other than the deeply recessed entrance of 117 W. Main which retains a tile floor, the entire facade has been remodeled with metal sheathing and metal-and-plate-glass doors and windows. Number 113 W. Main was a jewelry store for at least fifty-five years—thirty-five as Isenhour Jewelers and then twenty as Hedrick Jewelers.

50. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

201 E. Main Street
Between 1915 and 1925
Contributing building

Sanborn Maps indicate that originally the southwest corner of this building was the office an automobile repair garage and that the rear of the building was part of the garage itself. By 1942 the building was listed as a store. Subsequent to 1942 the east two-thirds of the garage was demolished and now remains a vacant lot. The facade of the one-story brick building is typical of those built during 1910s and 1920s. It features a central double-leaf glass-and-wood entrance flanked by shop windows, while the rest of the facade is composed of simple common-bond brickwork.

PARKING LOT

A parking lot fills the space where part of the automobile garage associated with 201 E. Main Street once stood.

51. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

205-209 E. Main Street
Between 1915 and 1925
Contributing building

The 1925 Sanborn Map indicates that at that time this one-story brick building consisted of two

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stores. The 1942 map shows that the western half of the building had been divided into a store and a restaurant. The shop front from this half of the building survives with its pair of glass-and-wood-paneled entrances and flanking shop windows. The eastern half of the building has replacement doors. A mid-twentieth century flat metal canopy shelters the front sidewalk; the upper facade is composed of brickwork panels and a plain cornice.

PARKING LOT

East of 209 E. Main Street is a parking lot that in 1942 was the lot for a used automobile dealership. A 1940 photograph shows that a tall metal-picket fence and gate separated the car lot from the sidewalk.

52. **COMMERCIAL BUILDING**

217-227 E. Main Street; 150 E. Market Street

Between 1915 and 1925; additions between 1925 and 1942

Non-contributing building

This two-story building extends from E. Main Street to E. Market Street. Used in recent years by Elkin's rescue squad, the south and east elevations have been covered with vinyl siding so that the original brick and granite details—shown in a photo taken prior to remodeling—can no longer be seen. According to the 1925 Sanborn Map, this building was originally used as the Greenwood Auto Company with sales and stock rooms on the first story of the south half, storage on the second story, and a repair department on the one-story Market Street side. By 1942 the building had been expanded on both the west and east sides and was identified as housing a variety of uses, including stores, a restaurant, and an auto repair shop on the Main Street side and a gas station on the Market Street side. Decorative pressed-metal ceilings remain within the Main Street side of the building. The recessed west wing on the Main Street side appears to be a post-1942 addition. The former gas station on the Market Street side was the scene of a tragic explosion in 1956.

53. **COMMERCIAL BUILDING**

132 E. Market Street

Between 1915 and 1925

Contributing building

This diminutive one-story brick building with a single door and window originally was a dry

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cleaning and pressing shop, one of several in downtown Elkin during the late 1910s and early 1920s. A small one-story addition was built to the east side after 1942.

54. (FORMER) ELKIN TOWN HALL

116 E. Market Street

1938-1939

Contributing building

Built by the Works Progress Administration in cooperation with the town of Elkin, this building originally housed the town hall and the volunteer fire department on the first floor, the health department on the second floor, and the jail in the basement. The well-preserved two-story brick building features string courses on north, east, and south sides. Except for the replacement of the fire station door by a door and a window, the facade remains intact. It has wood-and-glass doors, adjacent plate-glass windows with multi-pane transoms, a round-arched entrance to the second floor at the west end, and paired windows on the second story. A recessed panel at the top of the facade labels the building as the city hall. Sash windows line the east and south elevations.

55. (FORMER) F-W CHEVROLET COMPANY

102 E. Market Street

Ca. 1925

Contributing building

For at least thirty-five years this building housed the F-W Chevrolet Company, although originally it was the Elkin Motor Company. During its years as an auto dealership, the large, one-story brick building was composed of a salesroom on the northwest corner with a stock room to the south and a large repair shop to the east. The building now serves as the Habitat for Humanity store. The Market Street elevation is divided into sections by plain brick pilasters that extend above the cornice. The entrance and flanking windows near the corner are headed by decorative luxor-prism transoms. To the west are a combination of windows and auto entrances. While the Bridge Street facade is also divided by brick pilasters, it is distinguished by its segmental-arched parapet, band of six-light windows in the upper facade, and granite string course and cornice coping. The windows on the Bridge Street elevation, like those around the main entrance on Market Street, are headed by luxor-prism transoms. A door at the south end, which probably led to the upper level, has been enclosed. The large, open service area at the east end of the building has a bowed ceiling.

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GREEN SPACE

A green space now occupies the site where two early-twentieth-century commercial buildings stood until they were destroyed by fire in recent years.

56. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

111 W. Market Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

Although the first story shop front has been remodeled in recent years, the remainder of this two-story brick building appears to be intact. Recessed panels on the second story of the facade enframe two pairs of one-over-one sash windows. Both the east elevation and the rear (south side) of the building retain multiple sash windows at the first- and second-story levels. The 1942 Sanborn Map shows that an early use of the building was as an office.

57. (FORMER) ELKIN TRIBUNE BUILDING

113 W. Market Street
Between 1925 and 1942
Contributing building

The 1942 Sanborn Map indicates that this building was used for printing. In fact, it was the location of the *Elkin Tribune* until recent years. The one-story brick building has a central double-leaf entrance with a fanlight transom flanked by two pairs of sash windows with matching fanlight transoms. The upper level of the facade has three recessed panels—one above the entrance and one above each pair of windows.

58. HOME FURNITURE COMPANY

115 W. Market Street
1947
Contributing building

This two-story brick building has been used for the display and sale of home furnishings since 1956. However, Leo Hinshaw built the structure in 1947 to display and sell farm equipment. That use was short-lived, for around 1950 the building was converted to use by the A & P

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Grocery. Six years later it was remodeled for use by Home Furniture Company. The building had a fire in July of 1980 but reopened later that year. Constructed of concrete and steel, the front of the building is faced with yellow brick, while red brick is used for the sides and rear. The building has a recessed central entrance flanked by plate-glass display windows. The remainder of the facade is composed of two layers of three recessed panels with each corbeled at top and bottom.

PARKING LOT

Between 115 W. Market Street and the building at the southeast corner of Market and Church streets is a small paved parking lot.

59. OFFICE OF DANIEL J. PARK

SE corner Market and Church Sts.

Late twentieth century

Non-contributing building

This one-story, corrugated metal and stone-veneer building with low gable roof serves as a law office.

60. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

108 Court Street

Between 1925 and 1942

Contributing building

This tiny, one-story, stuccoed-brick building has a flat roof and a glass-and-wood-paneled entrance on the north side of the facade with windows on the south side. It may have been built by 1925 as part of the building at 201 E. Main Street, but it is not shown as a distinct entity until the 1942 Sanborn Map.

VACANT LOT

The southeast corner of Court and Market streets is now a vacant lot where once stood—as early as 1925—an automobile sales and service building. Later occupant Rumble Furniture Store burned Christmas Day 1975. Entrance to the lot is from Court Street.

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61. **BRYAN'S**
 131 S. Bridge Street
 Between 1915 and 1925
 Contributing building

In 1915 this was the site of a livery stable. By 1925 an auto repair shop and filling station had been built, a sign of the changing nature of transportation. The 1942 Sanborn Map shows that by that time the building was also being used as a machine shop and that the small one-story addition on the north side had been built. The 1961 Golden Anniversary Edition of the *Elkin Tribune* carried an advertisement for Bryan's, a machine shop that provided sales and service for a variety of products. Bryan's likely occupied the site since 1928; the 1961 ad claimed that it had been "Serving for 33 years." The facade of the one-story building appears as it did in its early years. It is brick with granite used for trim around doors and windows and for a string course and cornice coping. Projecting from the center of the building is the original canopy with a tile-covered hipped roof with bead boards and bold brackets on the underside. It was the filling station portion of the building. A central door opens from beneath the canopy to the office. Flanking the office were the service bays. Behind the parapeted brick facade, the expansive hipped roof is supported by concrete block walls.

VACANT LOT

North of Bryan's is a large vacant lot.

62. **DOBBINS STORE**
 146 S. Bridge Street
 Ca. 1940
 Contributing building

This narrow but long one-story building has always been used as a small produce and general grocery store. The one-story building has a brick facade with a stepped parapet cornice, a central double-leaf entrance, and flanking display windows. A standing-seam, metal-covered pent eave shelters the lower half of the facade. The side and rear elevations are wood frame with corrugated metal sheathing. The front half of the interior is covered with sheetrock and beaded boarding. The rear half of the building—probably an addition—has an unfinished interior. An open shed is attached to the front end of the building on the south side. The building was probably

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built around 1940, possibly after the major flood of that year (it being located in the flood plain). A previous owner recalls the building on site during her early childhood in the 1940s. By at least 1948 it was known as the Dobbins Store. In the 1980s and 1990s it was the Muncas Brothers store. In recent months it has changed ownership, but is still used as a grocery.

63. WAREHOUSE

NW corner S. Bridge and Standard Sts.
Post-1942
Non-contributing building

This large frame and metal warehouse is associated with the Smith-Phillips building supply business on Standard Street. Part of it may have been the livery (1925) and the hardware and building supply business (1942) shown on the Sanborn Maps. Nevertheless, the present building, doubled in size from the building shown on the 1942 Sanborn Map, dates from post-1942.

VACANT LOT

Between the corner warehouse and the building at 128 S. Bridge Street is a large vacant lot where an auto sales and service building stood from at least 1925 until 1997.

64. (FORMER) RIVERSIDE HOTEL

128 S. Bridge Street
Between 1915 and 1925
Contributing building

The first known use of this building was as the Riverside Hotel, conveniently located near the railroad depot. At another time it was known as the Myrtle Hotel. Later the building became the Elkin Bottling Company, which bottled Orange Squeeze, Pepsi-Cola, Ginger Ale, McNeill's Grape, and other brands. It was managed by Mr. C. A. McNeill. Though somewhat deteriorated in its unoccupied state, the handsome two-story brick building remains largely intact. At the center of the first story facade, a double-leaf, glass-and-wood entrance with a fanlight transom leads to the second story. It is flanked by two store fronts, each with a luxor-prism transom. The south store front has a recessed, double-leaf entrance. The second story is divided by raised brick pilasters and bands into three bays that correspond with the three bays of the first story. Segmental-arched windows surround the building at second-story level. Painted soft drink signs

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survive in part on each of the side elevations. The south side of the building shows the effects of the removal of the adjacent one-story auto sales and service building that stood until recent years.

65. ELKIN DRY CLEANERS

E side 100 block N. Bridge Street
Ca. 1941
Contributing building

This one-story brick building has a pair of identical store fronts with adjacent glass-and-wood recessed entrances and a display window to the outside of each. Pop-in muntins have been added to the windows. A narrow, slightly recessed panel carries across the entire upper facade. A photograph of the 1940 flood shows that the building had not been built by that time, but the 1942 Sanborn Map shows the building in place. For some years it was used as the Elkin Dry Cleaners.

66. COMMERCIAL BUILDING

109-113 N. Bridge Street
Early twentieth century
Contributing building

This two-story brick building consists of two store fronts divided by a central stair to the second story. Both first-story store fronts have been remodeled, but the second story remains largely intact. It features round-arched sash windows with round-arched brick hood molds, narrow recessed panels across the upper facade, and a decorative cornice with dentil and sawtooth bands. The south side of the building has segmental-arched windows at each level. This is the only surviving building of three that stood on the west side of N. Bridge Street between Market Street and the service alley. The others were destroyed by a fire in recent years. The 1915 Sanborn Map shows that #109 was then a restaurant, while #113 was a grocery. In 1925 both sides were identified as stores. In 1942, #109 was a store, while #113 was a tin shop. Both sides are now used as offices.

67. NEAVES BUILDING

112 Church Street
Between 1925 and 1942

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Contributing building

The 1942 Sanborn Map shows that at that time this building was used as a theater, with an office on the north side of the lobby and a small store on the south side. A marquee projected from the front of the foyer. The theater was built by Louis Mitchell. During the mid-1940s, attorneys R. Lewis Alexander (see #70) and Charles Neaves rented space in the building for their law office. The three-story, concrete-block building is faced with yellow brick on the front and red brick elsewhere. The modernistic facade features vertical pilasters, a parapeted cornice, contrasting vertically-laid brick bands, and glass block windows.

68. (FORMER) DAIRY QUEEN

111 Church Street

1960s

Non-contributing building

This one-story, stuccoed, concrete-block building has a projecting flat canopy on east and south sides to shelter the doors and service windows.

69. LUCY GRAY BEAUTY SHOPPE

113 Church Street

1961

Non-contributing building

The Lucy Gray Beauty Shoppe is a modern, one-story brick building with a flat roof, a parapeted cornice, metal-frame front door and window, and a reinforced concrete canopy across the facade. A low brick wall below the front window encloses a small planted area.

70. ALEXANDER LAW OFFICE

117 Church Street

1948-1949

Contributing building

This plain, one-story brick building features a flat roof, a parapeted cornice with tile coping, a six-panel front door, and flanking multi-pane windows. It was built by R. Lewis Alexander and

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Charles M. Neaves for their law office. Fifty years later, it is still owned and occupied by Alexander. When Market Street was extended west of Church Street in 1973, the Alexander Law Office was moved slightly to the south in order to preserve it.

71. (FORMER) McNEILL MEDICAL OFFICE

Behind 117 Church Street

Ca. 1950

Non-contributing building

Soon after Lewis Alexander and Charles Neaves built their law office at 117 Church Street, Dr. Claude McNeill built an office for his medical practice just uphill from the law office, facing Church Street. When the Market Street Extension was built in 1973, the building was scheduled for demolition. Instead, Lewis Alexander purchased the building, moved it behind his office, facing west, and used the building for storage. It is a simple, modern, one-story brick structure with a flat roof, a flat-roofed stoop sheltering the front door, and an adjacent multi-paned, glass-block window. Metal-frame windows line both sides of the building.

PARKING LOT

West of the former McNeill Medical Office is a paved parking lot.

CIRCLE COURT

On October 5, 1920, E. G. Click, owner of the Gwyn-Foard House (#74), sold the land for the creation of Circle Court and its houses to local builder C. B. Franklin. The agreement said that a street and a sidewalk were to be built by October 1923, and that no houses of a value less than \$5,000 could be built. Circle Court was a private development that was to be paid for by the property owners. Interestingly, the owners of 226 W. Main Street (corner of W. Main and Circle Court), 114 Circle Court, and 118 Circle Court were all associated with new business ventures in the 100 block (north side) of W. Main Street. (See #36, #72, and #73.)

72. DR. W. D. TURNER HOUSE

114 Circle Court

1923

Contributing building

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This is a fine one-and-a-half-story frame bungalow with a broad gable roof that encompasses the three-quarter-length front porch. The roof has widely overhanging braced eaves which are matched by those of the front gabled wall dormer. On either side of the house are slightly projecting bays. The front porch is supported by two heavy brick tapered piers and a central wood post set on a brick plinth. The arrangement of the multi-paned front door and of the windows is exceptional. Dr. W. D. Turner was the owner of the drug store (# 41) at the northeast corner of W. Main and Church streets that opened in 1924.

73. DR. HUGH PARKS HOUSE

118 Circle Court

1923

Contributing building

Hugh Parks was one of the doctors who had an office on the second floor of the Turner Drug Store after the Elkin Hospital closed at that location in 1926. When the Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital opened in 1931, he was on the medical staff. The Parks House is an excellent one-story frame bungalow. Sheathed in dark brown-stained wood shingles, it has an exceptionally low gable roof that encompasses the front porch. The roof has widely overhanging bracketed eaves, and a ventilation dormer projects from the front slope of the roof. Each side of the house has a small projecting bay; the front porch features a solid brick skirt with both brick and wood-shingled posts. Behind the house is a brick and wood-shingled outbuilding that may have originally been a garage but now appears to be an apartment or guest house.

74. GWYN-FOARD HOUSE

115 Circle Court

Ca. 1855

Contributing building

This unusual Greek Revival house, one of the finest in Surry County and the oldest building in the historic district, was originally the home of Richard Ransome Gwyn, superintendent of the Elkin Manufacturing Company and son of Elkin's founding father, Richard Gwyn. After the Civil War, R. W. Foard purchased the company's cotton mill and store and also bought and occupied this house. From at least 1936 to 1950 it was the home of Dr. E. G. Click, whose dentist office was across Main Street (#30). The Gwyn-Foard House is a two-story frame dwelling with a low

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hipped roof. It boasts crossetted and pedimented facade door and window surrounds and a double-leaf entrance with diamond-paned sidelights and transom. The most notable architectural feature of the house is its two-tier front porch, whose lattice posts, sheaf-of-wheat designed balustrades, and curvilinear lattice friezes imitate the decorative ironwork sometimes found on the porches of nineteenth-century urban houses.

GREEN SPACE

In front of the Gwyn-Foard House, an expansive lawn leads down the slight hill to W. Main Street. Although it appears to be part of the Gwyn-Foard House property, the lot is actually under separate ownership.

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1. **HUGH G. CHATHAM BRIDGE**

NC 67 over Yadkin River
1931
Contributing structure

Spanning the Yadkin River between Elkin in Surry County and Jonesville in Yadkin County, this long metal-truss bridge was erected in 1931 as State Project No. 7960, built by the North Carolina State Highway Commission with federal aid. The bridge was named in honor of Hugh Gwyn Chatham, president of Chatham Manufacturing Company, who died in 1929. The bridge consists of concrete pier under-supports, a two-lane road flanked by arcaded concrete guardrails, and two camelback metal trusses. A sidewalk runs along the west side of the bridge. At each end of the bridge, the concrete guard rails become solid and curve outward, creating handsome entrances to the span. At the Elkin end of the bridge, two sets of concrete stairs lead from the bridge down to the north and south sides of E. Main Street. The bridge is the fourth in a series of bridges that crossed the Yadkin River between Elkin and Jonesville. The first was a covered toll bridge said to be the longest wooden suspension bridge in the world when it was erected in 1872. It was replaced by a steel bridge in 1913. The third bridge, also a steel bridge, was built in 1917 to replace the 1913 bridge which had washed away in the 1916 flood. The 1917 bridge was replaced by the fourth, present, bridge, which was unusual for its time because its high span crossed the entire river bottom, well above flood level. (Indeed, it survived the 1940 flood.) The Hugh G. Chatham Bridge has served for nearly seventy years.

2. **YADKIN VALLEY RAILROAD**

Railroad tracks bet. Hugh G. Chatham Bridge and just W of S. Bridge St.
1890
Contributing structure

On April 9, 1890, the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad reached Elkin on a new line running from Winston-Salem to North Wilkesboro. As in towns all over North Carolina, the arrival of the railroad was a pivotal event in the development of the town, bringing opportunities for increased trade and easier access to markets for both farm and manufactured products. With the railroad in place and five trains daily, growth in Elkin began in earnest. The 1891 frame depot stood until recent years on the east side of S. Bridge Street just north of the tracks. Although passenger service was discontinued in 1955, freight trains still service Elkin on the tracks now leased by the Yadkin Valley Railroad from Norfolk Southern.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architect/Builder, cont'd.

Franklin, C. B. - builder
Burcham, H. M. - builder

Summary

Elkin, a town of approximately four thousand residents, is located at the confluence of Elkin Creek and the Yadkin River in the southwestern corner of Surry County. Although a few settlers inhabited the area from the mid-eighteenth century, Elkin's history as a town evolved from the 1840s, when the ambitious and highly capable Gwyn family utilized the water power presented by Elkin Creek to establish several small industries. The community sparked by this industrial activity flourished, and in 1889 Elkin incorporated. The following year, the first trains arrived on the new route created by the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad between Winston-Salem and North Wilkesboro. Elkin, like many towns in late-nineteenth-century North Carolina, took full advantage of the greatly expanded commercial and industrial opportunities afforded by the railroad. The Downtown Elkin Historic District represents the commercial boom years that characterized Elkin for a half-century after the arrival of the railroad. Today it is the town's historic heart.

Among the seventy-four properties (73% contributing) located within the historic district are two transportation resources—the railroad and the Hugh G. Chatham Bridge—that were critical to the town's growth; the oldest surviving commercial buildings in Elkin; the post office and the former town hall that were built with assistance from the federal government's post-Depression recovery programs; Elkin's first hospital, built in 1924; and the ca. 1855 Gwyn-Foard House, one of the oldest buildings in Elkin and one of the finest Greek Revival dwellings in Surry County. The Gwyn-Foard House ties the district to Elkin's founding family and to the manufacturing town's first industries.

The locally significant Downtown Elkin Historic District fulfills Criterion A for listing in the National Register because of its significance in the development of the town's commerce and thus with the town's prosperity. The district fulfills Criterion C for architectural significance because it contains a fine collection of buildings that represent well the standard commercial design used in North Carolina towns during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. One of these, the Harris Building, is an increasingly rare example in northwestern North Carolina of the once-popular use of cast iron and pressed metal to decorate entire facades of commercial buildings. The district also contains

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several dwellings of architectural significance. In addition to the Gwyn-Foard House, an exceptional example of the Greek Revival style, the Dr. W. D. Turner House and the Dr. Hugh Parks House are excellent representatives of Craftsman bungalows from the early 1920s.

The designated period of significance for the Downtown Elkin Historic District covers the period from ca. 1855, the year in which the historically and architecturally significant Gwyn-Foard House was built, to 1950, the year after which development slowed considerably, producing only twelve percent of the district's resources. In addition to the ca. 1855 construction date of the Gwyn-Foard House, other significant dates within the period of significance include 1889, Elkin's date of incorporation, and 1890, the year in which the all-important railroad service reached Elkin.

Historical Background and Commerce Context

The Downtown Elkin Historic District illustrates well the impact of the railroad on the commercial success of towns in North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Elkin was fortunate to be one of those towns that obtained railroad service. The town's birth, however, goes back a half century before the arrival of the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad in 1890.

Around 1820, Richard Gwyn (1796-1881) moved from Wilkes County to Jonesville, a Yadkin County town located directly across the Yadkin River from present-day Elkin. There he worked as a merchant for two decades and served as postmaster. During this time, Gwyn purchased several thousand acres of forested land on the north side of the river where there were few inhabitants. Around 1840 Richard and Elizabeth (Hunt) Gwyn and their large family moved across the river, where Gwyn built a two-story frame house, "Cedar Point," about a quarter of a mile west of Elkin Creek (Phillips, 33; *Centennial History*, 3-4).

Richard Gwyn's selection of property was a wise choice. With the water power available on Elkin Creek, and the creek's confluence with the Yadkin River, the site had excellent potential for industry. Gwyn wasted little time. First he built a grist mill. Then, in 1848 he and James Gwyn (his brother), Richard Ransome Gwyn (his son), Lytle Hickerson (his brother-in-law), and Columbus Franklin (his son-in-law) organized the Elkin Manufacturing Company and built a small cotton mill on the east bank of Elkin Creek where the public library now stands. The operation also included a blacksmith shop and a sash sawmill. A general store followed in 1851 and a post office in 1856 for which Richard Ransome Gwyn was the first postmaster (Phillips, 33-34; *Centennial History*, 5). Although none of these buildings survive, one of Elkin's finest houses was built around 1855 east of the mill for Richard Ransome Gwyn, whose family occupied the house until after the Civil War. Today it is the oldest building (#74) in the Downtown Elkin Historic District.

After the Civil War, R. W. Foard purchased the house, the cotton mill, and the store, while

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Richard Ransome Gwyn, along with his brother Nathan Hunt Gwyn and his brother-in-law Alexander Chatham, started a new enterprise about a mile up Elkin Creek. Known as R. R. Gwyn & Company, it consisted of a store and a grist mill. One of the commodities bartered at the store in large quantities was wool. In the 1870s the company purchased a wool carding machine to process the wool locally instead of having to haul it to Salisbury where it could be shipped by rail to distant woolen mills (Phillips, 34; *Centennial History*, 6).

In 1877 Alexander Chatham and his brother-in-law Thomas Lenoir Gwyn (another son of Richard Gwyn) took over R. R. Gwyn & Company, expanded the operation, and founded the Elkin Woolen Mills. (Richard Ransome Gwyn and other members of the Gwyn family had bought the cotton mill back from the Foards and continued its operation). In 1893 Alexander Chatham and his sons, Richard Martin Chatham and Hugh Gwyn Chatham, purchased Thomas Lenoir Gwyn's share of the Elkin Woolen Mills and established the Chatham Manufacturing Company. In the twentieth century, it became the cornerstone of Elkin's industry and economy (Phillips, 34-35; *Centennial History*, 6-7).

The growth of commerce and industry was facilitated by the construction in 1872 of a wooden covered bridge that spanned the Yadkin River between Elkin and Jonesville. The bridge, representing a significant improvement in transportation, was the first in a succession of four (1872, 1913, 1917, 1931) bridges built at this location, culminating in the 1931 Hugh G. Chatham Bridge (#1) that still serves as a link between the two sides of the Yadkin River (*Centennial History*, 6, 8).

Elkin's early development paralleled that of the various Gwyn and Chatham ventures. Most newcomers came to work in one of these enterprises, and some of them went on to establish businesses of their own. By 1880 Elkin had twenty-six households (including five boarding houses), a cotton mill, a woolen mill, three general stores, a school, two preachers, a wagon maker, a tinsmith, a carpenter, a painter, a shoemaker, and a blacksmith. With activities in Elkin still oriented toward Elkin Creek, Front Street on the east bank of the creek began to develop as Elkin's commercial center. By the end of the decade, *Branson's Business Directory* reported that Elkin had a post office, seven industrial concerns, four grist and saw mills, nine merchants and tradesmen, two boarding houses, two ministers, one physician, and one academy. The population stood at 288 (*Centennial History*, 8-10).

With commerce and industry expanding, and with the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad establishing a line between Winston-Salem and North Wilkesboro that would pass through Elkin, the town petitioned the state legislature for a charter and incorporated on March 5, 1889. Alexander Chatham became the first mayor. Elkin's new leaders wasted little time in seeking the services of prominent Winston-Salem civil engineer Jacob Lot Ludlow to lay out the town into lots, streets, and sidewalks. His 1891 plan for Elkin differs little from the present layout (Phillips, 35; *Centennial History*, 13-16).

In April of 1890, the first trains of the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad reached Elkin. With

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five trains a day, Elkin was positioned for growth (Phillips, 35; *Centennial History*, 17). Immediately, Elkin's physical orientation began to shift from Elkin Creek eastward. With the depot located on the east side of Bridge Street just south of Main Street, the intersection of those two streets became the center point of Elkin's commercial area.

In the first decade after the arrival of the railroad, Elkin showed many signs of progress. In 1891 the town's first hotel was built and the first local newspaper was published. In 1896 both a shoe factory and a furniture factory began operations. At the same time, Elkin became a significant produce market that drew trade from Surry, Yadkin, Stokes, Wilkes, Ashe, and Alleghany counties. The town remained a big market until the 1920s, when improvements in transportation—better roads and an increasing number of motor vehicles—gave farmers more options in terms of markets. In a single two-week period in the mid 1890s, Elkin's Click and Company shipped over 100,000 pounds of dried fruits to New York. The Elkin Canning Company, a blackberry cannery, was formed in 1899 (*Centennial History*, 18, 21-22, 26, 59).

A catastrophic event brought significant change to Main Street in 1898, when a fire destroyed five stores, the Elk Inn, the post office, a residence, and a law office. The clearance of these frame buildings opened the way for more new construction in brick which, not surprisingly, became the preferred type of construction. Brick construction was facilitated by R. L. Poindexter who, first with B. F. Rollins and later with J. W. Madison, operated brick manufacturing companies in Elkin. Conveniently, Poindexter was also a builder. The 1914 Industrial Edition of *The Elkin Tribune* credited him with the construction of "many nice buildings in Elkin." Old photographs show the increase in brick buildings, especially along Main Street, from the late 1890s onward (*Centennial History*, 24, 26, 28, 30, 36-37).

By 1900 Elkin's population had grown to 860. The following year, Elkin's first bank, the Elkin National Bank, was organized to serve the growing population and many new businesses. Elkin's growth continued at a steady pace for the next several decades. In 1910 the population stood at 1,200 (*Centennial History*, 30-31, 40).

In 1911, the first mile of the local Elkin and Alleghany Railroad was completed and put into use. Headed by Hugh Gwyn Chatham, the rail line was intended to link the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad with the Norfolk and Western Railroad, thereby gaining access to the timber and other products of northwestern North Carolina and the coal of western Virginia. From the late 1910s to 1931, when the railroad closed, the E & A office was located in a diminutive building (#35) at 229 W. Main Street in the historic district (*Centennial History*, 40).

The 1914 Industrial Edition of *The Elkin Tribune* reported that Elkin was essentially a manufacturing town with eleven industries established since 1890. The town could boast a large woolen mill, a brogan shoe factory, a machinery company, canning businesses, a furniture company, an ice and light company, a veneer company, a bottling plant, a building materials firm, a cotton mill, a buggy

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works, roller mills, three hardware stores, two drug stores, two banks, two clothing stores, five dry goods and notions stores, eight retail groceries, two furniture stores, two jewelry stores, two barber shops, two shoe shops, two blacksmith shops, two hotels, one building and loan association, three real estate firms, one job printing office and newspaper, one five-and-dime store, one livery stable, two cafes, one photography gallery, and other enterprises. There were also five doctors, two dentists, and two lawyers (Phillips, 35).

The 1915 Sanborn Insurance Maps for Elkin show that the south side of the 100 block of W. Main Street had been completely filled in with buildings and the north side nearly so. Commercial buildings continued in the second block of W. Main Street and also along E. Main, as well as along Bridge Street. In 1916 the first of two major twentieth-century floods inundated many buildings in Elkin's flood plain and along Front Street, but photographs suggest that except, perhaps, for basements, Main Street survived without great harm (*Centennial History*, 48-49).

Commerce in Elkin continued to expand in the 1920s, as demonstrated by the Sanborn Insurance Maps for 1925. Most of the commercial buildings shown on the maps and in period photographs survive, though some have been remodeled. The maps also show two significant changes within the area encompassed by the historic district. One was the introduction of automobile dealerships, repair shops, and gas stations (see #50, 52, 55, & 61) reflecting the changes in modern transportation. The other was the development of Circle Court (called A Place on the map) with its three early 1920s' houses on the east side of the street (see #36, 72, & 73).

One of the most significant events within the district during the 1920s was the establishment of Elkin's first hospital at the northeast corner of W. Main and Church streets (#41). Dr. H. Clay Salmons and Dr. Robert R. Garvey opened the hospital in 1924 on the second floor of the building above the Turner Drug Store. The hospital consisted of patients' rooms, an operating room, a laboratory, a sterilizing room, a kitchen, and two offices. During the first year, the hospital had 350 admissions; although it operated for only two years, it clearly demonstrated the need for a larger, permanent hospital in Elkin (*Centennial History*, 57).

The 1930 Census recorded Elkin with 2,456 residents. The decade was dominated by the Depression and subsequent recovery efforts. Although the Depression was, as a whole, difficult for Elkin, some companies, such as the Chatham Manufacturing Company and the Elkin Furniture Company, managed to continue operating without any shutdowns. One boon to local commerce came in 1931 with the opening of the Hugh G. Chatham Bridge (#1) across the Yadkin River. Although primarily a state project, it was built with federal aid. Later in the decade Elkin's downtown benefitted from other forms of federal aid that came as part of post-Depression recovery programs. A new post office (#29) opened on April 7, 1938. The modernized Colonial Revival building, still in use today, was designed by federal architect Louis A. Simon. The former Elkin Town Hall (#54) was built in 1938-1939 by the Works

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Progress Administration in cooperation with the town. It housed not only the town hall and the volunteer fire department on the first floor but also the health department on the second floor and the jail in the basement. The WPA also provided funding for Elkin's first public library, which was started by the Women's Club and was housed in the former office (#35) of the Elkin and Alleghany Railroad (*Centennial History*, 64-65, 71, 75).

Elkin's population in 1940 was 2,730. The year brought a natural disaster. On August 14, the Yadkin River flooded, this time rising eighteen inches higher than it had in the flood of 1916. Photographs show that in places the water rose up to Main Street, where basements on the south side were flooded. The damage in Elkin was estimated at half a million dollars, quite a sum for that time (*Centennial History*, 79-81).

World War II brought full production to industry in Elkin, and the town prospered. After the war there was an easy conversion back to the manufacture of civilian products (*Centennial History*, 91). Among the new buildings (at least since 1925) in downtown shown on the 1942 Sanborn Maps are the Neaves Building (#67) at 112 Church Street, the buildings (#56 & 57) at 111 and 113 W. Market Street, the Pure Oil Station (#40) at the northwest corner of W. Main and Church streets that replaced the Elk Inn, the building (#39) at 210-212 W. Main Street, the Town Hall (#54) at 116 E. Market Street, the post office (#29) at 213 W. Main, several of the small commercial buildings (# 30, part of 31, & 33) located west of the post office, and the one-story brick buildings (#6, 8-11) at 108-122 and 206 E. Main Street. A 1945 photograph of a victory parade on E. Main Street at the end of World War II visually connects the buildings on the south side of the street with those shown on the Sanborn Map and with those that are there now (*Centennial History*, 87).

After mid century, physical change in the Downtown Elkin Historic District was minimal to moderate. In the 1950s—give or take a few years—several small commercial buildings and offices (#68, 69, 70, & 71) were built on the west side of the 100 block of Church Street. During the 1960s and 1970s urban renewal brought new facades to several of the buildings on Main Street, such as those at 101 and 103 W. Main Street (#14 & 15) and at 111 E. Main Street (#48). In the early 1970s, Market Street was extended westward from Church Street to Front Street. This caused the relocations of the Alexander Law Office (#70) at 117 Church Street and the former McNeill Medical Office (#71) and the disruption of the north end of Circle Court (*Centennial History*, 113).

The 1982 architectural survey of Elkin recorded a downtown that was an excellent physical representative of the small towns built in North Carolina during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. It also recorded a downtown that clearly reflected much of the story of Elkin's history. Since then, the district has suffered several losses, most notably the demolition of the railroad depot on S. Bridge Street, the loss by fire of two buildings on the west side of the 100 block of N. Bridge Street, and the replacement of the old Bank of Elkin with the construction of the modern Northwestern

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Bank (soon thereafter First Union Bank - #45) at the northwest corner of W. Main and N. Bridge streets. In the past few years, Elkin's Main Street program has emphasized the importance of preserving Elkin's downtown, which is not only an active commercial center but also the town's historic heart. This nomination is part of that preservation effort.

The Downtown Elkin Historic District is significant not only in being the place where commerce in Elkin thrived beginning with the arrival of the railroad in 1890, but also because it reflects the effect of the railroad on towns in North Carolina. A comparison with other nearby towns makes even clearer the impact of the railroad and Elkin's demonstration of that. Directly across the river in Yadkin County, Jonesville was an old town when Elkin was first settled. However, with the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad passing through on the north side of the river, Elkin's prosperity increased, while Jonesville's decreased. Today it is hard to visualize Jonesville as an historic town. Elsewhere in Surry County, Mount Airy in the northeastern corner of the county acquired rail service about the same time that Elkin did, and like Elkin, its budding industries were able to thrive with the same general prosperity that Elkin experienced. In the center of the county, Dobson, established as the county seat in 1850, did not have access to rail service. It remained a very small county-seat town, and today its center no longer even hints of its nineteenth-century history. Another comparison greatly similar to that of Elkin and Jonesville can be seen in neighboring Wilkes County. Wilkesboro was the county seat and the mercantile center for the area in the nineteenth century. However, the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad ran along the north side of the Yadkin River, terminating in North Wilkesboro. The result was that while Wilkesboro remained a pleasant and reasonably active county seat town, North Wilkesboro quickly eclipsed it in size, commerce, and industry. A visual comparison of the two Wilkes County towns makes this all too obvious.

Architecture Context

A similar comparison of the historic architecture of downtown Elkin with that of other nearby towns offers another demonstration of the differences in towns based on whether or not they acquired the all-important rail service during the late nineteenth century. Elkin, which had rail service, experienced rapid commercial development shortly after the arrival of the railroad and for some years thereafter, resulting in an architecturally rich collection of commercial buildings from the first half—and particularly the first quarter—of the twentieth century. The same was true for Mount Airy and North Wilkesboro which also had rail service. By contrast, towns such as Jonesville, Dobson, and Wilkesboro which were bypassed by the railroad languished during the same period and could not compete with the railroad towns in terms of the number, types, and overall sophistication of commercial buildings erected.

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Downtown Elkin was the center of the town's commercial activity during much of the twentieth century and, as such, contains an architecturally strong collection of commercial buildings representative of commercial styles popular from the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. Also present in the district is a small collection of exemplary houses, including a highly significant Greek Revival house from the 1850s and an excellent pair of 1920s' Craftsman bungalows.

The majority of buildings in the Downtown Elkin Historic District represent variations of the standard commercial design of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Characteristics of these buildings, the best group of which is located along the south side of the 100 block of W. Main Street (#16-26), include round-arched window, often with round-arched hood molds, or rows of rectangular windows; recessed panels created by raised brick pilasters and horizontal bands; and corbeled cornices that range from the simple to the richly detailed. Most of the detailing is achieved through the use of brick, but occasionally it is achieved through modest amounts of contrasting stone or concrete. These details are found primarily on the upper floors of two- or three-story buildings and on the upper facade of one-story buildings. Typically, the first-story shop fronts have been remodeled during the mid-twentieth century, but some of the buildings retain their earlier recessed entrances, luxor prism transoms, and other typical features. One building, in particular, stands out from the other early-twentieth-century buildings. The 1902 Harris Building (# 24) at 123 W. Main Street has a decorative pressed-metal facade with classical detailing. The use of such facades was a popular treatment for commercial buildings during the early twentieth century, but few of these survive in northwestern North Carolina.

In the 1930s and 1940s several buildings of modernistic design were erected in downtown Elkin. The object of this type of design was to achieve a modern, streamlined appearance, often with an emphasis on the vertical. In the western portion of the district, the Reeves Theater (#26) and the Neaves Building (#67) are the most imposing of these buildings, their detailing being achieved either through brickwork or through the use of enameled metal panels. At the east end of the district, 112-120 E. Main Street (#10) is a one-story commercial block with a modern step design created by the use of narrow bands of white stone or concrete against red brick.

In addition to the standard commercial buildings in the Downtown Elkin Historic District, there are good examples of other building types. At the east end of Main Street, the former Liberty Tobacco Warehouse (#4) was one of several tobacco warehouses known to have operated in Elkin. Built ca. 1920, the mammoth one-story brick building has a stepped-parapet gable roof, one of the most characteristic features of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century tobacco-related buildings in piedmont North Carolina.

From the 1920s through the 1940s, buildings, such as car dealerships and gas stations, that were related to the rising use of automobiles began to be built in downtown Elkin. Two excellent examples, in particular, survive. At the southeast corner of E. Market and N. Bridge streets stands the ca. 1925

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former F-W Chevrolet Company (#55). Like other such businesses it offered both sales and service. Distinguished by brick pilasters, a segmental-arched parapet, and luxor-prism window transoms, this well-preserved building has a showroom and office at the west end facing Bridge Street and a much larger open interior space to the east comprising the majority of the building that was used for auto service and repairs. At the northwest corner of W. Main and Church streets stands the former Pure Oil Service Station (#40), dating from the 1930s. It demonstrates the practice by gas companies of using particular building designs to convey the image they wanted to project in the early years of increased automobile usage. Pure Oil stations of the period were designed to look like small English country cottages to impart to the potential customer a comfortable, non-threatening, residential look. The ultra-steep gable roof and chimney are hallmarks of the type.

Another good representative of a building type can be seen with the 1937 United States Post Office (#29) at 213 W. Main Street. Post offices were built in numerous towns across America during the 1930s as part of the Federal government's post-Depression recovery efforts. These buildings tend to be either Colonial Revival in character or representative of the Art Deco style. The Elkin post office, a one-story brick building with a flat roof, displays a modernized version of the Colonial Revival in its somewhat abstracted classical entrance, fifteen-over-fifteen sash windows, and patterned red brick with contrasting limestone trim.

The district also contains a small collection of exemplary dwellings. The oldest of these is the ca. 1855 Gwyn-Foard House (#74) at 115 Circle Court. It is one of the finest examples of the Greek Revival style in Surry County. The two-story frame house with low hipped roof boasts crosssetted and pedimented facade door and window surrounds and a double-leaf entrance with diamond-paned sidelights and transom. The most notable stylistic feature of the house, however, is the two-level front porch whose lattice posts, sheaf-of-wheat designed balustrades, and curvilinear lattice friezes recall the decorative ironwork sometimes used on the porches of nineteenth-century urban houses.

Across Circle Court from the Gwyn-Foard House are the three other dwellings in the district. The M. Q. Snow House (#36), technically located at 226 W. Main Street, is a two-story brick Colonial Revival house with a wrap-around porch and a bracketed hood over its central entrance. North of the Snow House are the Dr. W. D. Turner House (#72) and the Dr. Hugh Parks House (#73). Though differing from each other, they are both fine examples of the Craftsman bungalow. These frame houses—one with weatherboard siding and the other with wood shingles—have broad gable roofs with widely overhanging braced eaves and engaged front porches with heavy posts, all typical of the style. The Snow, Turner, and Parks houses were all built in the early 1920s when Circle Court was developed.

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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Downtown Elkin Historic District is shown by the heavy black line on the accompanying compilation of tax maps, drawn to a scale of 1" = 100'.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the Downtown Elkin Historic District is drawn to include the commercial buildings and post office erected during the district's period of significance—ca. 1890-1950—that contribute to the historic and architectural character of the district and form a cohesive group distinguishable from its surroundings. The boundary is also drawn to include the Hugh G. Chatham Bridge across the Yadkin River and (a portion of) the railroad, both of which were vital to the development of the district, along with the Gwyn-Foard House that was associated with Elkin's founding family and earliest industry, and three 1920s houses located between the Gwyn-Foard House and the district's commercial buildings whose owners were historically associated with businesses and Elkin's first hospital located within the district.

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PHOTOGRAPHS:

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs:

- 1) Downtown Elkin Historic District
- 2) Surry County, North Carolina
- 3) Laura A. W. Phillips
- 4) 5/1999
- 5) State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina
- 6-7)

A:	S side 100 block W. Main St., view to SE
B:	Gwyn-Foard House, 115 Circle Court, view to N
C:	114-118 Circle Court, view to S
D:	S side 200 block W. Main St., view to SE
E:	Post Office, 213 W. Main St., view to SW
F:	NE cor W. Main & Church Sts., view to NE
G:	S side 100 block W. Market St., view to SE
H:	S side 100 block E. Market St., view to SE
I:	S side 100 block W. Main St., view to SW
J:	S side 100 block E. Main St., view to SE
K:	S side 200 block E. Main St., view to E
L:	Railroad tracks, warehouse, & bridge, view to NE
M:	Dobbins Store, SW cor. S. Bridge & Standard Sts., view to SW
N:	Hugh G. Chatham Bridge, view to N



